

The President's Radio Address *March 8, 2003*

Good morning. This has been an important week on two fronts of our war against terror. First, American and Pakistani authorities captured the mastermind of the September the 11th attacks against our country, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. This is a landmark achievement in disrupting the Al Qaida network, and we believe it will help us prevent future acts of terror. We are currently working with over 90 countries and have dealt with over 3,000 terrorists who have been detained, arrested, or otherwise will not be a problem for the United States.

Second, the chief United Nations weapons inspector reported yesterday to the Security Council on his efforts to verify Saddam Hussein's compliance with Resolution 1441. This resolution requires Iraq to fully and unconditionally disarm itself of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons materials, as well as the prohibited missiles that could be used to deliver them. Unfortunately, it is clear that Saddam Hussein is still violating the demands of the United Nations by refusing to disarm.

Iraqi's dictator has made a public show of producing and destroying a few prohibited missiles. Yet, our intelligence shows that even as he is destroying these few missiles, he has ordered the continued production of the very same type of missiles. Iraqi operatives continue to play a shell game with inspectors, moving suspected prohibited materials to different locations every 12 to 24 hours. And Iraqi weapons scientists continue to be threatened with harm should they cooperate in interviews with U.N. inspectors.

These are not the actions of a regime that is disarming. These are the actions of a regime engaged in a willful charade. If the Iraqi regime were disarming, we would know it because we would see it. Iraq's weapons would be presented to inspectors

and destroyed. Inspection teams do not need more time or more personnel. All they need is what they have never received, the full cooperation of the Iraqi regime. The only acceptable outcome is the outcome already demanded by a unanimous vote of the Security Council, total disarmament.

Saddam Hussein has a long history of reckless aggression and terrible crimes. He possesses weapons of terror. He provides funding and training and safe haven to terrorists who would willingly deliver weapons of mass destruction against America and other peace-loving countries.

The attacks of September the 11th, 2001, showed what the enemies of America did with four airplanes. We will not wait to see what terrorists or terror states could do with weapons of mass destruction. We are determined to confront threats wherever they arise. And as a last resort, we must be willing to use military force. We are doing everything we can to avoid war in Iraq. But if Saddam Hussein does not disarm peacefully, he will be disarmed by force.

Across the world and in every part of America, people of good will are hoping and praying for peace. Our goal is peace for our own Nation, for our friends, for our allies, and for all the peoples of the Middle East. People of good will must also recognize that allowing a dangerous dictator to defy the world and build an arsenal for conquest and mass murder is not peace at all; it is pretense. The cause of peace will be advanced only when the terrorists lose a wealthy patron and protector and when the dictator is fully and finally disarmed.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:47 a.m. on March 7 in the Cabinet Room at

the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 7 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, who

was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Letter to Senate Leaders on the Nomination of Miguel A. Estrada To Be
a United States Court of Appeals Circuit Judge
March 11, 2003

Dear _____:

The Senate is debating the nomination of Miguel A. Estrada to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Miguel Estrada's life is an example of the American Dream. He came to this country from Honduras as a teenager barely speaking English and went on to graduate with honors from Harvard Law School. He has argued 15 cases before the Supreme Court of the United States and served in the United States Department of Justice under Presidents of both political parties. The American Bar Association has given him its highest rating. When appointed, he will be the first Hispanic ever to serve on the D.C. Circuit.

I submitted Mr. Estrada's nomination to the Senate on May 9, 2001. But his nomination has been stalled for partisan reasons for nearly 2 years in which the Senate has not held a vote either to confirm or to reject the nomination.

The Senate has a solemn responsibility to exercise its constitutional advice and consent function and hold up or down votes on judicial nominees within a reasonable time after nomination. Senators who are filibustering a vote on Miguel Estrada are flouting the intention of the United States Constitution and the tradition of the United States Senate. The filibuster is the culmination of an escalating series of back-and-

forth tactics that have marred the judicial confirmation process for years, as many judicial nominees have never received up or down Senate votes. And now, a minority of Senators are threatening for the first time to use ideological filibusters as a standard tool to indefinitely block confirmation of well-qualified nominees with strong bipartisan support. This has to end.

The judicial confirmation process is broken, and the consequences for the American people are real. Because of the Senate's failure to hold timely votes, the number of judicial vacancies has been unacceptably high during my Presidency and those of President Bill Clinton and President George H.W. Bush. The Chief Justice has warned that the high number of judicial vacancies, when combined with the ever-increasing caseloads, leads to crowded courts and threatens the administration of justice. When understaffed, the Federal courts cannot act in a timely manner to resolve disputes that affect the lives and liberties of all Americans. The courts cannot decide constitutional cases promptly, which harms people seeking to vindicate and protect their rights, and the courts cannot rule on commercial cases efficiently, which hurts the economy, businesses, and workers. Our system of equal justice under law administered fairly and efficiently is at risk. The American Bar Association in 2002